

Home Circle.

HOME.

BY A. PEARSON.

We are want to associate with home more than its abstract meaning—"The home in which we live, a dwelling." This meaning fails to thrill the soul with the emotions that occupy it as memory reverts to the home. Dryden said, "Home is the sacred refuge of our life." But it is the associations of a "refuge" that must thrill with joy and store it "sacred" in the memory. To earn the title "sacred refuge" home must be more to us than a place to eat, sleep, adjust our toilet and be sheltered from the elements of nature. It must do more for us than merely to supply our physical needs. These are a worthy part of its functions and without this all else would be imperfect, but it is equally imperfect without other relations of the home. There is the home circle, father, mother, brother and sister, and the relation of these sanctifies or blights the place—exalts it in our meditation or debases it in our memory. Is the relation congenial? Then meditation exalts the home and memory recalls it with unclouded joy. Is it incongenial? Then meditation brings only remorse and memory gives torture. When every relation of home is congenial it is a true type of the celestial heaven in miniature. In fact the same spirit of peace reigns in the terrestrial as in the celestial home; the chief element of each being love, and this element differs but slightly, by its being more reciprocal in the terrestrial—more dependent upon the restrained selfishness of each member of the home, while in the celestial, self is lost by the disembodiment of the spirit, though personality remains as before to enjoy a common love stripped of all selfishness.

Love is the true key that unlocks all the sacred treasures of the home. Love in the home circle locks selfishness in its prison cell, and liberates congeniality to hold sweet converse for hours at the cheerful evening fireside. Love confines the frown and discloses the smile; holds back the angry and brings forth the soft word; stifles the snub and bestows the caress; disperses the cloud and liberates the sunbeam; withholds malice and gives out kindness; paralyzes the arm that would wield the pludgeon and pours oil into every wound of the dagger; pushes aside the intoxicating bowl and presents life giving nectar. Love is the aroma that charms aside every pang of the home and crowns joy king of the household.

Separation may bring pangs, but how hallowed the memory of one who loved

and added to the joys of home. What inexpressible yearnings fill the soul when by the vision of faith we assuredly behold the absent ones only transplanted from the terrestrial to the celestial home, there awaiting the joyous reunion. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "Love is of God," and a just and holy love is the key to the good things prepared in the bounty of God both terrestrial and heavenly, but especially is this true in our relations with other intelligent beings.

There are homes which with their associations present a darker picture, one where, instead of love, selfishness reigns supreme. The dwelling, the father, mother, son and daughter are also here, but how widely different. There is no strong love here to restrain anger, petulance, strife, harsh words, blows, wounds both external and internal—no gentle leading is here but driving with brute force. Slight disagreements arouse passion that leads to blows. Every accident to the household fixtures elicits a flood of maligning. No peace exists except in slumber and this is disturbed by frightful dreams. This home has nothing enjoyable. Its members steal away to seek pleasure elsewhere, and from their want of congenial qualities carry strife and discord to all they associate with. They seek to drown their unhappy emotions in strong drink and revelry. Every avenue to sensuous pleasure is traveled, every haunt of vice is visited, every visionary expedient is tried until all the holy aspirations of being are paralyzed and the prison, the gallows or suicide ends the dark scene. Ends, dare we say, ah! no. By an unrestrained gravital force they have been pulled down, *down*, deeper and *deeper* into the vortex of vice, until the divine cord of restraint is broken and gravity lands them in the home prepared for the devil and his angels, that for misery and woe beggars all description. Here remorse is the prevailing emotion. "Ye knew your duty but ye did it not," written in glowing letters meets the gaze at every turn. "Lost, but not extinct," is the remorseful meditation. Here the thought of reunion adds fear to the pangs of remorse, lest others may reach this dread abode. Luke 16:19-31.

Four homes are thus briefly described, two in a class, by association, which are so intimately blended, that the members of each terrestrial home naturally and almost irresistibly glides by class relations into its corresponding spiritual home. To which class does our terrestrial home belong? is a most pertinent consideration

for each one to entertain. If to the first, where love reigns, what can I contribute to make success more sure? If to the second, where selfishness reigns, what can I do to mend its deplorable condition and avert the dreadful result. Much of the success in business life depends upon the associations of home. With a courage that falters not at any barrier the inmates of a happy home go forth with alacrity and hope to return at the appointed hour laden with rich rewards for their willing toil—the elder from their manual labor with bountiful supplies for the body, and the children from school with increased store of useful knowledge. The thought of such a home quickens every activity, gives strength to every faculty and fills the whole being with the elements of success. Such a home is protection against the prison, the gallows and the melancholy that makes suicide possible.

LET US TAKE TIME.

Let us take time for the good-by kiss. We shall go to the day's work with a sweeter spirit for it.

Let us take time for the evening prayer. Our sleep will be more restful if we have claimed the guardianship of God.

Let us take time to speak sweet, foolish words to those we love. By and by, when they can no longer hear us, our foolishness will seem more wise than our best wisdom.

Let us take time to read our Bible. Its treasures will last when we shall have ceased to care for the war of political parties, and rise and fall of stocks, or the petty happenings of the day.

Let us take time to be pleasant. The small courtesies which we often omit because they are small, will some day look larger to us than the wealth which we have coveted, or the fame for which we have struggled.

Let us take time to get acquainted with our families. The wealth you are accumulating, burdened father, may be a doubtful blessing to the son who is a stranger to you. Your beautifully kept house, busy mother, can never be a home to the daughter, whom you have no time to caress.

Let us take time to get acquainted with Christ. The hour is coming swiftly, for us all, when one touch of His hand in the darkness will mean more than all that is written in the day-book and ledger, or in the records of our little social world.

Since we must all take time to die, why should we not take time to live—to live in the large sense of a life begun here for eternity.—*ScL*.

EVERY sinner brings about his own ruin.